

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

1. (currently amended) A stent delivery assembly comprising:
  - an elongate guidewire having a proximal end, a distal end, and a length therebetween and a reduced diameter portion to receive a stent thereon;
  - a radially expandable stent positioned coaxially on and in direct contact with the reduced diameter portion of the guidewire towards the distal end such that the stent can be placed by and moved by the guidewire; and
  - a an elongated tubular sheath member covering at least a portion of the guidewire, the sheath having an internal elongated lumen terminating in a distal opening to freely slide over a portion of the length of the guidewire and over a portion of the length of the stent, the sheath being ~~wherein the sheath is~~ retractable from a first position where the stent is covered by the sheath to a second position where the stent is uncovered such that the stent is unhindered during sheath retraction, the sheath having a diameter greater than a diameter of the guidewire to receive the guidewire therein during movement, the stent positioned on the reduced diameter portion of the guidewire to accommodate the tubular sheath as it passes thereover.
2. (previously amended) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising a coil disposed at the distal end of the guidewire.
3. (original) The assembly of claim 2 wherein the coil is radio-paque.

Claims 4-6 (canceled)

7. (previously amended) The assembly of claim 1 further comprising at least one radio-paque marker band located on the guidewire proximally or distally of the stent.
8. (original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein the radially expandable stent is comprised of a radio-paque material.

Claim 9 (canceled)

10. (original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein the radially expandable stent is comprised of a shape memory alloy.

Claim 11 (canceled)

12. (original) The assembly of claim 1 wherein the sheath further comprises a flush port located near a proximal end of the sheath, wherein the flush port is in fluid communication with a distal end of the sheath.

Claims 13-32 (Canceled)

33. (previously added) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the stent is releasably connected to the guidewire proximal of a distalmost tip of the guidewire.

Claim 34 (canceled)

35. (currently amended) The assembly of claim 1, further comprising a stop on the guidewire, the stop having a height less than an internal diameter of the sheath, the sheath being passable over the stop.

36. (currently amended) A stent delivery assembly comprising:

an elongated guidewire having a proximal end portion, a distal end portion, and an intermediate portion between the distal and proximal end portions and configured to be directed to a surgical site, the guidewire having a reduced diameter portion to receive a stent;

a stent expandable from a constrained first configuration for delivery to the surgical site to a larger expanded second configuration, the stent mounted coaxially on the guidewire at a position spaced proximally of a distalmost tip of the guidewire so that positioning of the guidewire carries the stent to position the stent at the surgical site; and

a sheath covering a least a portion of the stent and having an internal diameter greater than an outer diameter of the stent in the first configuration, the sheath and guidewire being relatively movable to expose the stent to enable movement to the expanded second configuration, the sheath having a longitudinal lumen terminating in a distal opening, the distal opening being circular and with an internal diameter dimensioned to accommodate during relative movement an external diameter of

the stent and guidewire for freely slidable relative movement, the stent mounted on the reduced diameter portion of the guidewire to accommodate relative movement of the sheath.

37. (new) The assembly of claim 36, wherein the stent is releasably connected to the guidewire.

Claim 38 (canceled)

39. (previously added) The assembly of claim 36, wherein the stent is comprised of a shape memory alloy.

40. (previously added) The assembly of claim 36, further comprising at least one radio-paque marker on the guidewire.

41. (currently amended) The assembly of claim 36, further comprising first and second stops on the guidewire to maintain the stent in position on the guidewire, the stops dimensioned to fit inside the sheath to accommodate the sheath when the sheath is positioned thereover.

42. (previously added) The assembly of claim 41, wherein the first and second stops each have a diameter less than a diameter of an intermediate portion of the guidewire.

43. (currently amended) The assembly of claim 41, wherein the stent is axially spaced from the first and second stops and unattached thereto to provide a gap therebetween so the stent can slide between the stops.

44. (currently amended) A stent delivery assembly comprising:

a elongated guidewire having a proximal end portion and a distal end portion and configured to be directed to a surgical site;

a stent expandable from a constrained first configuration for delivery to the surgical site to a larger expanded second configuration, the stent mounted coaxially on the guidewire at a position spaced proximally of a distalmost tip of the guidewire so that positioning of the guidewire carries the stent to position the stent at the surgical site; and

a sheath covering a least a portion of the stent and having an internal diameter greater than an outer diameter of the guidewire, the sheath and guidewire being relatively movable to expose

the stent to enable movement to the expanded second configuration, the sheath having a longitudinal lumen terminating in a distal opening with an internal diameter dimensioned to accommodate during relative movement an external diameter of the stent and guidewire for freely slidable relative movement; and

~~The assembly of claim 36, further comprising a stop on the guidewire, the stop having a height less than an internal diameter of the sheath and dimensioned to fit within the sheath to accommodate the sheath when the sheath is positioned thereover.~~

45. (currently amended) The assembly of claim 44, wherein a proximal end of the stent is axially spaced distally from the stop to provide a gap therebetween.

46. (new) The assembly of claim 44, wherein the guidewire includes a reduced diameter portion and the stent is mounted on the reduced diameter portion of the guidewire to accommodate relative movement of the sheath.

47. (new) The assembly of claim 1, wherein the stent is positioned inside the sheath so the sheath covers the outer surface of the stent during insertion of the assembly.